[From "Die Männerinsel" pp292-330]

Douglas (part 4)

"*Douglas, beginning of December 1917*"

Another month has passed, the state of my health is constantly changing. I had a high temperature again in the night, and bad dreams. Am I to die a slow death here like the 'barmy professor', or so many others? Herr Rist has just told us that in the cemetery here a civilian prisoner buried in March has been exhumed on Government orders, because there are graves of English soldiers to both sides of him, and their relatives no longer wish to put up with the shame of that. The six hundred marks that the exhumation costs must be come out of our Camp accounts. — Hörns is being kind enough to continue writing things down for me, after he has read to me from Gulliver's Travels. I believe that the deeper sense of this novel is that human tragedy remains the same, no matter whether a giant lives amongst dwarfs or a dwarf has to die amongst giants. Out in the world it looks lively enough, four Zeppelins downed in France. The newspaper informs me with malice that there is still sufficient food to eat amongst the Central Powers, as was proved by the gala dinner that the Sultan gave for the Kaiser in his fairy palace on the Bosphorus, and the grand [p. 293] receptions which the Austrian emperor and empress found bestowed upon them in Munich and Dresden. On the birth of an archduke, the Danube-Monarchy's Office of Marshal to the Court asked for and got the very finest quality swathing linen, while at the same time the Austrian soldiers were having to wear shirts made from paper! How simply and modestly compared to this, (went the report) did the royal family of England now live in Sandringham. On top of this, it told us that Switzerland had no coal for the winter, Holland no coal for its railways, Sweden had to put bread on ration, and Norway was close to having not one single ship left. Besides all this, trustful Cadorna has been dismissed, just as also has been Jellicoe, the 'Victor' of Jutland, before him. Clemenceau, 'the old Tiger', has been made prime minister, but has said nothing by contrast to Barthou and after Kühlmann's words in the Reichstag about returning Alsace-Lorraine, although Lloyd George in Liverpool spoke with forked tongue to say: "Nor do we have any question concerning Alsace-Lorraine."

In Marseilles, the Russian troops, who no longer wished to bleed for France, have with no more ado been massacred. Transports of mutinying allied troops are being brought from Thessalonica, which is now a pile of rubble, and landed in Malta. There is a rumour that the captive Tsar has been declared King of Siberia. Japan has stated that it will no longer be sending any troops to Europe. Twenty-five thousand Don-Cossacks have laid down their weapons; and, lastly, on the day that the United States declared war on Austria, the great commercial harbour of Nova Scotia, Halifax, has been blown to smithereens by explosions of war munitions. Twenty thousand dead and wounded.[i] Twenty-six German aeroplanes carried out a raid on London. Herr Hinterseher[ii] has also brought the news [p. 294] that Rodin,[iii] France's greatest sculptor, has died. Hinterseher said he had visited Rodin in his studio. Now Rodin will have no need to design any 'Victory Monuments' intended to glorify this War.

Kant had the correct moral feeling, when the said: "After a war, no matter how victorious it may have been, a nation should first of all do penance in deep shame for the limitless crimes it has committed on humanity, then the usual church services of thanks can take place."

To designate war as an 'invigorating bath of steel' is frivolous — as the saying goes, 'it depends on the point of view, whether of youth or of old age.'[iv]

In the afternoon, Professor Hinze and Dr. Wartemberger were invited round to a cup of tea and a ship's biscuit, I myself could not get up from bed. What was on the mind of all of us was the horrible death of old Herr Evers. Dr. Wartemberger had seen him in the wooden hut in his open coffin, his face completely blue. In the morning, he will be buried in the prison churchyard, alongside the two civilian prisoners shot during the rebellion. The Commandant has allowed only four persons to give last rites to the dead man. The dead man no longer has any family left, and that was the reason why he hanged himself. Now the window in the hut opposite us, behind which the old man had sat for so long in loneliness, is in darkness. Dr. Wartemberger told us that he thought the case was particularly tragic because the whole lack of fairness in the internment of civilians and its consequences had had a spotlight thrown on them. Herr Evers had lived more than *twenty-*

five years in Newcastle, set up a prospering business, married an Englishwoman and had two young sons. He was interned as an 'enemy alien', his sons pushed into Kitchener's Army; his wife, however, was moved away from Newcastle, when Newcastle was declared a war zone. When both his sons, one after the other, had fallen in battle with the Germans, their mother went mad, and flung herself from the window. When the Commandant had told this to the hapless man [p. 295], he hanged himself, yesterday on the crossbeam of his hut.

"Has the Swiss chap been officially informed?" Herr von Beyerheim wanted to know.

"All that is pointless, what on earth can he do?"

"Well", said Professor Hinze and flexed his hands, making all the joints crack, "perhaps they'll torment the Englishmen a bit for it in Peaceful Old Ruhleben, on the principle of if you hit my dog, I'll hit your dog."

"Firstly", Dr. Wartemberger answered him, "after long years of experience in Germany, they'll pay less attention to us than they did before, and secondly, on principle and humanity, I think very little of these tit-for-tat reprisals. The civilian prisoners of the other countries suffer just as much in their innocence as we do, and, after all, we are not dogs, such as they called us."

"But we've been living a dog's life these past four years", growled the professor.

"And another thing", Herr von Beyerheim interjected, "in my opinion, the Steel-Nib King won't last much longer, "for weeks now he's been running around all day long, without looking either to his right or to his left, all along the barbed wire, and has refused all food for three days now."

"That's another crazy case: here his millions are like pearls in the desert", Hinze said. "The old chap is pining himself away to death over the experience he's having after forty years of activity in this country. He ought to have offered an immense pay-out to the State, to see whether they would release him penniless to Germany."

"But his money has long since been confiscated, and his industries put under the 'public trustee'.

I interjected: "Well, we're all going to get compensation after the War, aren't we? The Swiss chap is supposed to have said, five marks a day for theft of liberty."

Dr. Wartemberger laughed scornfully: "Is that what you think? [p. 296] I have no faith in these rumours, even if Germany is victorious, nobody there has any personal interest in standing up for us at all. Perhaps some amount or other will be stipulated — if Germany is victorious — but what we'll get from it will be the same old sod-all."

Herr von Beyerheim began to ask: "But our confiscated property abroad! Take me, for example, I had a villa built by Inigo Jones, and had a valuable collection of paintings".

"They will remain confiscated; perhaps there will be some compensation,[v] I don't know; in any case they will say, and I have already heard it in letters from back home: 'What on earth do you want? Did you sacrifice your life for the Fatherland, did you consecrate your services to the Fatherland? Where the devil were you, when the War broke out? Well, there you were, staying in that country, living on honest food, with nothing happening to you. You kept well away from all the shot and shell. We, on the other hand - well, was there any sacrifice we did not make? Anyone who's able to work, can earn money back home after the War. You straw-mattress heroes and barbed-wire patriots, what on earth possessed you to go abroad to our enemies?', and a lot of expressions as similarly endearing as those."

"For my part, I would prefer to go to the South Seas; after all, the savages are better people than us", and with that, the doctor bit savagely into his ship's biscuit, and glared round us, one by one, through his thick glasses.

"My English mother-in-law has told my wife to start divorce proceedings against me, the grounds being four years of wilful abandonment" - this was Herr von Beyerheim, who interjected bitterly: "and I've actually had the sentence: my children have been taken away from me, and are going to become Englishmen; [p. 297], and all that because I was forcibly removed from my family and have had to live here as a prisoner. My

mother-in-law also forbade my wife on the very first day, on the threat of disinheriting her, to send even one shilling in support. Who will give *me* justice?"

"Oh, yes, women", growled Professor Hinze, the rabid woman-hater, "their primitive hate makes them the worst; if there were no women, we should not be sitting here in prison!"`

"How do you mean?" I asked in astonishment.

"That is simple enough: if there were no women, then we would not have been born; old Theognis[vi] was completely correct: it is better never to be born at all."

"Do you actually think that if we had women here, then the next generation as well would still be sitting here in prison? For that reason - long live the Island of Men!"

"I thought", I broke in, "woman is usually the last friend, who remains with man in misfortune, just think for example of poor Mrs Schl., who, when she heard, that her husband was lying here dying, hurried here, with her last scraps of money and her children, and was held back for so long that she was only just in time to close her husband's eyes - and on top of that, she was an Englishwoman."

Dr. Wartemberger said softly: "There are two kinds of women, ones who have a heart and love a man through their whole life, and longer; and ones who have no heart, they love a hundred men; and that means in reality, they love only themselves", to which Herr von Beyerheim replied with a sigh:

"Yes, I believe in true love, just as others believe in the Lord God, whom also they have never yet met."

Professor Hinze then reached in his pocket and pulled out an illustration from a German magazine, which, strangely enough, had not been confiscated by the censor; it showed death arraigning Christ, who was hanging high up on a cross, which towered above a never-ending graveyard, lit by the cloud-enveloped moon. [p. 298] And as to what HE, the son of God, might say concerning this ceaseless slaughter on the earth; what HE might say to HIS High Church of England, which was just now at that time preaching that seventy million children of men should be starved to death,[vii] Christ's silent answer came: "The Saviour makes no reply; yet deeper still HE sinks his head upon HIS chest."

*

I still have to make some entries about the political events of this December 1917.

Defeat of the English at Cambrai, whereas a week earlier a false victory had been announced, so that all over Britain and on our Men-island as well, the bells of joy had had to be sounded out. A brigadier general, twenty-six years of age (!), fell in the battle.

Kühlmann denounced Lord Robert Cecil, the son of the famous Lord Salisbury, for having spread it about throughout the world, in order to vilify the Germans as barbarians, that polygamy had been introduced in the German Empire, and also that the corpses of soldiers who had died in battle were being made use of in German 'fat utilisation' factories.

Count Czernin[viii] declared in Vienna that as far as Austria was concerned, Strasbourg and Alsace-Lorraine were as important as Trieste and Istria were for the German Empire. He hoped that the German and Austrian troops would soon join hands on the Western Front to give the proper answer to the French and the English.

In the meantime, General Allenby,[ix] together with his Jewish followers, has marched into Jerusalem, and the *Times* proclaimed loudly: "From now on, England is not only the greatest Christian and Mohammedan, but also the greatest Jewish power on earth." In all the churches in England a 'tedium' was sung. The bells in Douglas tinkled the whole day long.

[p. 299]

Two English convoys, four armed cargo vessels and a destroyer were torpedoed twenty miles off the coast — amongst the hundred and fifty prisoners taken to Kiel is the nephew of Sir Edward Grey![x]

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"*Douglas Camp, December 1917*"

Once again all our hopes of being exchanged one day have proved false. Everything remains the same as it was; no, day by day it becomes more unbearable. There's something dreadful about how things keep repeating themselves, and how the repetition spins a web softly around your soul. We are in the fourth year of the World War, I am in the third year of imprisonment without rights, but the inconceivably violent drama, in which personal heroism wrestles personal heroism in the form of disciplined destructional tactics — that simply no longer leaves us with any inspiration. Too much has already been destroyed. We, who sit to the side of things on a distant island, coerced, spectators becoming a burden to ourselves, also long for an end. The ambivalence of our circumstances is what is so unbearable, horrible. We are not in direct life-threatening danger, but our existence is in the power of arbitrary action, we are not prisoners of war taken out of combat, but civilian prisoners interned against the law of all nations, we do not live in dungeons, but the barbed wire which separates us so visibly from freedom is gradually penetrating deep into our brains. There are thousands of us made to depend on one another; and each one of us would like to be left on our own, or else to be with his family. At first, common need made us into companions of fate, befriending each other; now it makes us hostile. We have food to eat, but are not full, we are not sick, but neither are we well. We dare not make complaint, when we bear in mind the mass suffering of embattled humanity; but all the same we do complain and accuse — with no response! We busy ourselves, [p. 300] and yet we do nothing — apart from wait. We hope, and our hope can after all only be directed at a self-evident fact, the fact that at some time or other, everything comes to an end, this one or that one. What there will be in a world which has transformed so horrendously and become strange to us, like our own family, for us to occupy ourselves *with*, begins to lose its sense. Like the eternal mists of this island, despair and resignation swathe us in. The non-every-day, the great events, have lost their ability to grip, only the tragedy of the every-day, of the small things have success in tormenting us. The intellect does not function when faced with monstrously huge events, as at the Front, and witnessing them has allowed us to bear our imprisonment more easily; but now, in the times of eternal and minute worries about the most personal aspects, it awakens straightaway with great trenchancy. We no longer have any overwhelming impulses, which bring our mind to silence; in these times, the mind speaks too much, at every miserable nothingness that irritates us. In order to remain calm in the face of this pettiness which dominates us all, one must be very stupid or very mature. I am neither of the two, no more than most other men are.

*

"*Douglas, Isle of Man, December 1917*"

With a thousand confused choirs of life droning around us,
How we must harken hard, to hear our heart!!

I see I have only a few more pages left in this diary which I had so longingly hoped to finish off back at home in peace restored. — How I should have liked to have all my previous diaries as companions in lonely hours. I still remember so very clearly how unwillingly I made my first entries, when I had only just learnt to write, and only reward or punishment on the part of my father, who had also always kept a diary, could make me do it. I have to smile, [p. 301] when I think of it now that I had on occasions, to fill the pages out, simply copied down mottos from the calendar, the sense of which I mostly did not understand. I also wrote fairy tales, in which with a child's cunning I hid my wishes for Christmas presents and birthday presents; then later, in various boarding-schools, homesickness drove me to add pieces of extra information, to prevent any more gaps from arising. Even the most day-to-day remarks, such as what there had been to eat and what jokes the teacher had told, transport me, on reading them again, into surroundings now submerged in my mind. And under the present circumstances, far from home, amongst men I don't know - well, that's when I would like to read of my days in school, read of old friends (how many of them have fallen!) and acquaintances, of joys and sufferings, which we had considered so important (ah, yes, the bad marks, which my grandfather had unfortunately considered to be of even greater importance, and which could spoil staying on holiday at his house), the family celebrations, the dancing classes, all that travelling, which stretched further and further afield; the happy first days at university, the changing moods and wishes one had, the false hopes and surprises which life brought me in recompense — and so many different things! In thinking back on everything, I feel that I have already become too old. Since the future is so uncertain and so dark, one's view returns so much more by preference to something that cannot be taken away from one - pleasant memories, of a past in which one did not feel so alone and abandoned. — When I read through everything I entered into this book as a person deprived of liberty, then, in comparison to earlier days, when each day I put down conscientious notes, the picture I get seems somewhat out of kilter, as if time had been travelling past like an express train, filled so very much with many different experiences and impressions. — And yet every minute was very carefully weighed and considered, these war years counting as twice and [p. 302] three times as much, even though, such as is the case with many other men, they did not visibly wear me down and turn me grey. World history walks across Europe with thunderous strides, and washes away whole dynasties in a sea of blood, and, with volcanic power, changes the nations and the relationships between the nations. The World War makes the great gap through which humanity in its final phase will step. In just the same way as in childhood hours seem to be years, so it is in those who have become old that years seem to be minutes. Ever since the inventions of man have destroyed all earlier concepts of space and time, history, too, doubles its pace. If its first chapters were long and meaningless, then its last chapters will be short and similarly without meaning. The synthesising mind of man will fashion the panorama of the world to be increasingly uniform, and each one of his inventions to open up an incalculable series of new ones, fashioning these to be even more uniform; until at some future time the 'acclaimed' world state of a 'levelled chaos of nations', guided by the principle of 'the same entitlement of the unified human race', will denote the limit of all possible development. I would not like to believe in this entelechy[xi] of the history of human kind!

The previous century saw the first scenes of the final act in the drama of world history, the struggle of the new with the old, two steps forward and one step back again, revolution and reaction, to the point where there will still be only victories of the revolution.

And now back to what applies to prisoners such as us! I am sitting on my own, at my window seat in the asbestos hut; the rheumatism has eased up, but for how long? The rain patters down monotonously on the roof, next door Bohltsmann is playing a nocturne on his violin. Just as beasts of prey run restlessly back and forth in their cage without purpose, so one's thoughts, driven by inner turmoil, also begin once more to run back and forth in a circle, always around the central point of the eternal question of 'How much longer?' [p. 303] Why are we sitting here on this island for years on end, deprived of freedom and many items of our property? Every Englishman is an island. 'Isolate and rule', by means of this aberration of the wisdom of the Roman state, the island-empire has achieved its world dominion. 'Splendid isolation' was the goal striven after and attained, up to the World War. But this desire, to isolate oneself and others, brought about actions which have cast deep shadows on the glittering image of national advancement. And that comes about because these actions stand in crass contrast to the general concept of culture held at the present time, and especially to that concept of humanity as for-ever preached forth by none other than England. Schiller in his *Maria Stuart* set up an eternal memorial to the violation of the right to hospitality and the law of nations; the tragic downfall of Napoleon on the Island of St. Helena; the miserable demise of the American freedom fighters aboard rotting ships during the American Revolutionary War,[xii] will, apart from 'purely political considerations', live on in the memory of mankind as unworthy spectacles of a great nation, and dangerous

examples to follow. But not until the beginning of the twentieth century was a measure of political warfare introduced on the large scale of a kind, the extent of which the baleful history of hostages of war in its barbarian epochs had not known, to wit: the sequestration of the civilian population in concentration camps during the Boer War.[xiii] This brutal measure has been deservedly condemned in the writings of all civilised countries. But when the outbreak of the present World War brought confusion to all concepts, the measure was adopted by all belligerent powers, to serve as a reciprocal means of reprisal. Ugly greed was also pandered to, by having purely private goods worth millions confiscated. — The prisoners in France are the ones who suffer most, while the Central Powers, despite the bad example, showed more cultural conscience. [p. 304] But England, which introduced this practice, has even implemented its use to the most ruthless extent in the internment of defenceless civilians on ships and islands. It even locked up without distinction fifteen-year-old ship's boys, taken prisoner on the North Sea, and innocent members of the Basle Mission on the Gold Coast; Germans and Austrians, who were striving on neutral ships to get back home from all parts of the world; crews of merchant ships, who knew nothing of the outbreak of war, and fell into English hands on the high seas, amongst them seventy-year-old sea captains. England interned bank directors and commercial employees, sixteen-year-old summer-course schoolboys,[xiv] students, travellers on honeymoon and leisure tourists; waiters, actors, hairdressers, craftsmen; then, as well, people, too, who had spent their whole life in prominent positions in the services of England, and whose wives were Englishwomen, while their sons were sent to the Western Front; in a word, all the civilians they could capture, and who had not denied the land of their birth through having become naturalised.

And that's the way the Isle of Man in the Irish Sea acquired the sad fame of becoming the 'Isle of Men'.[xv]

Neither at the Front nor behind the lines, nor in service at home, do so many thousands live, except in multi-national War, without their family and without means of defence, without any prospect of a change in fate, as conscienceless objects of repression, a silent heroism of enforced inactivity.

Is civilian internment, this most modern measure or warfare, to become a permanent provision of belligerent cultural powers, or is it not? It will become altogether one of the most urgent questions of the 'law of war', which will have to take up the time of the Geneva Convention or of the International Court of Justice at The Hague; for without a solution, no one any longer will be able to stay in a foreign country, much less to set up an existence there, or buy property, without constant fear [p. 305] of being locked up, if war were to develop, and be deprived of everything they have, if they did not change their nationality at the correct time. But even changing nationality will be of no use to them, because the newspapers are already crying out for even those foreigners who have acquired English nationality to be rounded up and locked away. If this uncertainty, whether felt to greater or lesser extent, restricts intellectual and material contact, and with it prevents the return of rapprochement between the cultural nations, so furthermore this attack and intervention which has been carried out on the liberty of civilians and on the possession of their purely-private property can serve as a precedent in future wars for the whole civilian population of a country to be handed over without protection of law to the tortures and coercions of the enemy; as will be the case, if a solution to this question which affects everybody is not found.

Thus I close this volume of my diaries with an imaginary appeal to the good sense and conscience of the world. If it should fall into competent hands, then, that being so, these years shall not have been lived through and noted down in vain.

The Prison Camp in Douglas,
Isle of Man, December 1917.

[p. 306]

"*Douglas, Isle of Man, December 1917*"

Without a diary, one cannot find one's way properly through the tangle of things that happened. I was on the point of finishing my account at the end of my last volume, actually, I intended to have the whole collection of notes destroyed by the purifying flame on New Year's Eve. — You never know whether these private thoughts will still be able after all prove fatal to me, as soon as the transport away from here ever begins. We are allowed to take away a certain weight of luggage, and everything will be pawed through, particularly what has been left behind.

And yet, the habit of conversing with oneself in a diary, is at the same time a kind of inner reflection; it is the keeping of a physical ledger, and is said to promote and consolidate one's inclination to truth. It is useful to keep a diary because it has an educational effect on reflectiveness, and protects one from absentmindedness. — I remain aware, however, in doing this that everybody who takes issue with the world around them and formulates their thoughts in writing, professes advance knowledge. But perhaps in the end the warm surrender to the intuitions of the moment, even when it runs the danger of becoming derailed, is better than that majestic glory of never having had or written down anything idiotic.

I shall attempt to combat the cankerous web of the demonstrations of displeasure by bringing in opposing views, because letting oneself go is unhealthy and immoral. Goodness knows! What on earth does the fate of an individual matter in this gargantuan struggle of humanity, what does the injustice under which we mindlessly suffer matter measured against the norms that determine the fate of the world!

Very well, then! Let us, with all our courage to face life once more collected together, go off into the fifth year of the World War!

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[p. 307]

But it's not easy. The year began, as every year has begun with the question: How much longer still? By now this has become a way to say 'hello', to which no reply is any longer expected. We have been too ready to listen to the optimists, who know from a 'very specific source', from a thousand secret indicators in the life of the Camp, that the day of liberation is moving ever closer. And, in the end, are they not right, is it not true that each day brings closer to death? Do you think we prefer to listen to messages from pessimists?

"The War? You want to know how much longer it will last? Well, just little bit longer, that's for certain. What do you mean? Exhaustion, mutiny, financial troubles? Don't tell me you don't believe any of that?"

But we prisoners are not alone in posing this question with special fury at the beginning of the year; those, too, who on both sides are waiting with baited breath for every report from the Front; they who day-in day-out see new bands of armed men moving out, and trains of wounded returning home; they who each day read the casualty lists, hesitantly and yet with haste, to see whether the name of a dear one is amongst those on the list; they all have the silent question of their lips: "How much longer?"

And finally, anyone who is able to look on this tremendous struggling of the nations impartially or philosophically, who sees only the struggling of human beings, not of nations, who deplores the obliterated cultural objects and the collapse of all the links which in the last ten years have been initiated through trade, commerce, science and art, and no less through the lively sporting life between the nations, even that man is uneasy at the beginning of the fifth year of the World War. "How much longer?"

The reservist officers were given official notice today that next week they would be going into internment in Holland; but that does not cover officers on the retired list, such as Herr von Beyerheim. [p. 308]

The English propaganda press has issued the watchword for 1918: "Whoever speaks the word peace, will be guilty of high treason!"

The newspapers proclaim that an aircraft bomb has hit the famous façade of the Certosa near Pavia,[xvi] and that in the last five days sixteen ships and forty-five thousand pounds of frozen meat were sunk. Because of the meat emergency, the military had to be called out in London, Glasgow and Manchester, to move out against the starving people; attacks by the populace on the boat berths and cellars of the 'Rich' have taken place — and all the while England blockades Germany! Another item: Trotsky is about to break off the peace talks in Brest-Litovsk. In China: immense flooding and out-break of plague. Just as we were discussing these events, the full moon over the sea went a blood-red colour never so far seen.

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"*Douglas, Isle of Man, January 1918*"

I'm now once again back in regular training with the gymnastics team. My multi-sided written studies today have reached their two-thousandth page. I'm just finishing off a tree of the development of architecture and its styles, all of which, from Babylon to the Rococo, are related to each other. — To my great delight, I have received a reply to my letter, from Houston Stewart Chamberlain, sick as he is. In it I gave him a short outline of my philosophical idea of the 'Worldwave in the Orb of Time'.[xvii] His answer was very encouraging, I shall have to go to Bayreuth. — *The Nun* by Diderot is being passed from hand to hand, completely read to bits and pieces; Caserta started that off. Our intrepid theatre has been putting on *The Family Schimek* and *Babuschke*; our head waiter, took the part of Zabadill.

In the night something horrible had occurred near to where my quarters are. Hans W., to whom I had just been speaking in the theatre, had suddenly gone crazy and stabbed [p. 309] his tent-mate five times with a knife. He then rushed off in his nightgown to the washroom, to lay his hands on a gun. Now he's locked up in prison, and his victim is in the hospital.

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"*Douglas, Isle of Man, January 1918*"

The King, who had to respond to superior pressure and give up his family name, despite his having ninety-nine per cent German blood, has dispatched Rufus Isaaks,[xviii] who together with Lloyd George carried out the Marconi shares scandal,[xix] as his ambassador to the Court [sic] of President Wilson. Despite the cold spell gripping Europe, everyone is talking of the imminent German Offensive; if only it could only bring in the decisive conclusion once and for all, despite the stupid speeches of Lloyd George and Wilson!

Everything is frozen up, even the tooth brushes and sugar ration. We placed our earthenware tobacco pots on the paraffin stove, so we could put them in our beds as warmers, because the straw of the mattresses has gone damp. We continue to freeze; the daily fat ration is no bigger than a shilling piece.

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I had to go to the Commandant's office, along with countless others, to fill in a receipt for our monthly money; three months late, four pounds; for which in Germany a hundred marks had to be paid. One pound a

week has to pay for everything. Our day for eating meat did not happen, because the kitchen committee had to reject the meat that had been delivered, because it was inedible. — In the Upper Camp, a young man has castrated himself…

Count Z… had applied for a job as an agricultural labourer on a farm near Gloucester, he was still in a state of being dead drunk, when they transported him off to it. [p. 310]

Yarmouth has been attacked from the sea, but the newspapers are treating it as a minor matter. In Paris, Cailleux[xx] has been imprisoned, because he was planning a *coup d'état*.

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"*Douglas, Isle of Man, January 1918*"

A sudden tropical rain storm and greenhouse atmosphere; everybody who has rheumatism is rolling his eyes. Coming from gymnastics, I met Captain Campbell in the Guard Room. He used to be a traveller in wine, now, far from shot and shell, he's ransacking the Camp finances, and was just about to take out his commission fee for his deliveries of bad wine. In the evening the theatre put on *Heimat*,[xxi] the men as women were just too comical; Mahsuch, the Jew, plays, would you believe it, the vicar. I'm reading Thomas Mann's glorification of Prussianism in his *Frederick the Great and the Grand Coalition*. — This time it was three English recruits, due to go to the Front tomorrow, who took their lives in an unspeakable location.

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Today, Kaiser William's birthday, I received the Christmas post which had been sent to me from Berlin on 4th December (!) In June General B……ck and Lord Newton in The Hague had jointly decided on having better control of the postal connections, and had also announced the initial stages of the final exchange of civilian prisoners. Neither of these plans came to any fruition. From the letters I discovered that more of my friends had fallen in battle, and that my step-father is my brother's company commander. — In Germany, we still have sugar; but not here, the pound of granulated sugar that was sent from Munich to Hinterseher, the sculptor, is all the proof that's needed. — Now it has, however, turned out to be alum! [p. 311]

A number of copies of the notorious book *J'accuse*[xxii] have been added to the Camp Library by the Commandant's HQ. Anyone reading English newspapers on a day-to-day basis has nothing to fear from the view of history held by this 'German'; he does not even need to hate him, for blessed are the poor in spirit.[xxiii] Oderberg brought me a book, *History of two nations*, in which the Frenchman Bainville[xxiv] wishes the ultimate objective of the War to be as a second Peace of Westphalia.[xxv] In those days the Great Electoral Prince was forced to give precedence to the French Ambassador! — An American troop-transporter has gone down in the Bristol Channel, the *Times* tells us that as they were drowning the soldiers sang patriotic songs; one German-American sergeant, by the name of Müller, sang the loudest — but where were the rescue teams while this was going on?[xxvi] Carson,[xxvii] First Lord of the Admiralty, had to stand down, but not for this reason. In the evening, we were still talking, nestled in our overcoats in our hut about the protest meeting of ten thousand English engineers in the Albert Hall against the speech by von Hertling,[xxviii] the German Chancellor; no, they don't want any Peace!

*

"*Douglas, Isle of Man, February 1918*"

On the meadow the gorse is already in full bloom, the crows are cawing in the trees, and the earth smells earthily of spring. A bitter wind has been blowing in from the sea; I gulped it in with open mouth. When I came into the Hall after an endurance run, a veritable dog-parade was in progress. The Quartermaster was inspecting the damn things; their owners are afraid that the dogs will soon be put down, like the cats. While renowned doctors are praising up horse-meat as the 'very healthiest of food for the people', they are prescribing their posh patients capons and salmons. — There are crackles and rattles in the English state. At a major speech by General Seddes in Glasgow, the workers began to sing *The* [p. 312] *Red Flag*,[xxix] and the General had to disappear through a side-door. Russia has declared war on Rumania; she wishes to claw back Bessarabia.[xxx] In Versailles, Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando[xxxi] announced that they were rejecting the peace proposals of Hertling and Czernin.

The first 'swallow',[xxxii] announcing the imminent German Offensive, has flown over London; many dead, wounded and stretches of streets collapsed by the dozen, indicate its path. The big munitions strikes in Berlin have given the Allies a straw to grasp at with their shaky hands.

*

"*Douglas, Isle of Man, February 1918*"

After the performance of *What will people say?*[xxxiii] I made the acquaintance of our 'Diva', who had portrayed Lady von Zobelsdorf. She, I mean *he*, invited me into his tent. He explained the fact of his long hair by saying it was a protest against the close-cropped style he used to have during his nine months' stay in the prison at Brixton. He has transformed his 'nook' into a fully-fledged boudoir; white roses gave out their perfume from a slender vase, and everything was covered with flowered cretonne. He gave me an opium cigarette, read to me from his lyrical outpourings, performed a dance, which without a doubt was intended to be Indian, and showed me a Buddha carved in soapstone, in which he lit incense. In everything he did I felt I was dealing with one of those miniatures, who want to give vent to their little soul and to present themselves as unparalleled in 'their atmosphere'. *Habeat sibi*.[xxxiv] Snowflakes were falling thickly when I left the voluptuous tent of the 'Diva'.

Our recreation ground has been closed off, because the Corporal who was the supervisor there, had gone on leave; so four thousand men can wait, but the rent payments are still being taken out. In the Upper Camp another [p. 313] election meeting is taking place. In the entertainments hut, the new Chief Capt'n was due to be elected. Numerous candidates for this not unlucrative post extolled their strengths and merits in sprightly speeches and poured out whole basketfuls of promises. In the end, however, the Commandant chooses the man he needs. It is the old English democratic trick, which the Old Dame plays on her colonials: divide and rule!

My letter on the occasion of the eighty-seventh birthday of Princess Eliese was not to the liking of the censor in London; it was, all said and done, somewhat explicit, and now it's landed back with me. — In *Velhagens Almanac*[xxxv] of 1912 I read that the mother of Louis Philippe, the last king of France,[xxxvi] was the daughter of an Italian prison guard. That once more proves that those born on the wrong side of the blanket are often the most capable ones in life, and what people only have bother about, is what the individual makes of himself, and what God determines to be his true rank. — In the night we were awakened by somebody shouting out: "I want to die for everybody, *I will die for all…*", a bare-footed figure came running past in the moonlight, soldiers with fixed bayonets confronting it. Prisoner Silex has gone mad.

*

"*Douglas, Isle of Man, February 1918*"

I am now reading *The beautiful girl of Pao*,[xxxvii] which transports you into a different world, and then did some further work on the history of Brandenburg. The struggle of the Great Elector[xxxviii] for his existence puts one very much in mind of present-day Germany's struggle, with the same enemies on all sides. It is to be hoped that the Kaiser will not need to sign any Peace Dictate of St. Germain.[xxxix] The English newspapers are now spitting into the face of Russia, which does not, however, leave them without response, and is publishing the Allies' secret treaties with Rumania. We are gazing into an abyss. Ex-President Roosevelt [p. 314] is wrestling with death, and in Thessalonica the Serbian government has been obliged never to conclude a separate peace with the Central Powers.

In the night two tents burnt down, and we of the volunteer fire brigade had tear the canvass apart and pour buckets of water onto the smouldering straw mattresses. These poor chaps have now lost their last of their personal possessions.

I had to lie down for three days with a neuralgic headache, and could not eat a thing. The wind howled like a pack of hungry wolves; then downpours of rain threw themselves on to the asbestos roof, performing deafening drum roar; for hours on end. In my fever phantasies, I believed I was going crazy. On the third evening, I went out on my own to the cliffs. Distant flashes of lightning streaked across a wall of cloud, which rose slowly from the sea, and began to constrain the broad arch of the sky. The stars shone more dimly, as if their clear light was obscured by veils. The sky hung deep and grey over the sea, which was capped with white crowns of foam and staggered about like a drunken man. The hungry seagulls, screeching horribly, shot past me, coming in very close.

*

Three cheers for the first messages of peace! The Ukraine has concluded peace with the Central Powers; and Russia, too, is about to declare an end to the state of war. A sum of financial compensation has even been stipulated for civilian prisoners, and so we are all happy that we, too, are not going to come out of it with nothing. Wrapped up in our winter coats, and with a stiff shot of grog, we greet the first red of morning on the eastern sky.

*

[p. 315]

Today I'm sitting all on my own in the asbestos hut, because Herr von Beyerheim had, in accordance with a telegram from the War-office, been obliged to pack all his things together within the space of three hours. Where he was being sent to, he didn't know, and because of that he swiftly made out his Will, which I, with it sewn into my hat, was to keep for him. I am very depressed; everything reminds of our long comradeship, and I am worried.

*

I did not trust my eyes, when I, coming back from general athletics exercises, saw on the square a tight circle of men surrounding Herr von Beyerheim, who had returned. He spoke of the stormy crossings, of the night he spent in the police prison in Liverpool, of the English soldiers, who made Lloyd George responsible for the endless War. He told us that on the way back, hundreds of English deserters, watched over by elderly soldiers, had been brought to our island; on board the ship, he had also come across twenty consumptive Austrians, all of them destined for Knockaloe, where they would probably die. When he had arrived in Liverpool, a second telegram had come in from the War Ministry, with the command: "Return Beyerheim."[xl] Now he is back here, once more, and his absence has taught me to treasure him twice as much.

*

More food restrictions are on their way; that has come about because the locals on the island were threatening to take our Camp by storm. The chief press officer of the *Isle of Man Times* is a Negro of the full blood, who puts the Commandant into a state of shock, and hints at sharp practices the Commandant is supposed to have carried out during the Boer War, when he was lessee of a canteen. So we have oat gruel without milk and sugar, along with it oily black tea, three millimetres of margarine a day, Argentinian frozen meat with dried vegetables, and in the evenings we get a piece of Canadian cheese, as big as a little finger, [p. 316] together with bits of ship's biscuit left over from the soldiers' rations. I have told the Swiss Envoy about this starvation diet. If he does even does manage to read my letter — it's still in question whether it will be misappropriated beforehand —, his slap-up diplomats' dinners will taste all the better to him.

*

"*Douglas, Isle of Man, February 1918*"

This is England's answer to Germany's conclusion of peace with Russia: "Russia's disappearance from the theatre of battle has concentrated our forces on the Western Front, and the arrival of the United States promises us a powerful replacement. We need no longer look for help from the 'rusty old steam roller' in the east, we now know who our friend is, and who is not. A new war is beginning for us; and one which is more favourable than the one so far. When in 1914, German began its well-prepared attack on the freedom of the world, it took us perfidiously by surprise. We possessed only a 'contemptible little army', as the Kaiser called it, which could at the most defend only the motherland. By contrast, we have today a great armed force equipped to the best with all it requires, and beyond that we have true allies throughout the whole world. If Russia, despite all obligations and sacred vows to fight for the righteous cause, now leaves us in the lurch, then we probably have no reason to give up hope. The New World stands at our side and gloriously restores the old balance of power.

Thus we begin the new war with greater auxiliaries and more reasoned prospects than we had in 1914 of ridding the world once and for ever of the nightmare of Prussianism. When the full weight of our last great ally comes to bear with vengeance, the final victory will also be ours! The same about-turn as in armaments can also be seen in our politics. No longer [p. 317] will inane counsels, confusions and delaying procedures inhibit us. Our ministers of today are better ones than their predecessors. No longer do people expect from us in times of crisis a policy of '*wait and see*'. Those times, thank God, are past, when a so-called statesman did not wish to send the German reservists back home quickly enough (?),[xli] so they could fight against us, while another minister did his best to make it easier to export wool into Germany. We have taken a clear note of policy from the teachings of Sir William Ramsay.[xlii] The spirit of our nation has become healthier and more patriotic. In it, individual adherents of the Bolshevists have no role to play. The broad populace knows well what the important thing is for us, solely this: the restoration and complete reparation of *poor little Belgium*,

and that there shall be no peace until the predatory aggressiveness of the Teutons has been destroyed. A daily declaration of our war aims does not find much sympathy, it is sufficient if we say we are fighting to conquer the Germans. Once they are conquered, then there will be sufficient time to make known our conditions. Our nation has always only protected its own freedom, and with it the freedom of Europe, and in the previous century helped the idea of liberty to a breakthrough in the entire world. The small states know now that by contrast, they have everything to fear from Germany. — Nothing is therefore more lamentable than the mood and the tone in the debates of this week in the Lower House of Parliament. The pacifists of all parties vie directly with each other in their unbefitting criticism of the Government and seem with it only to wish to be intent on depressing the public and persuading it that the continuation of the struggle for our noble end is senseless. They tell us that Germany is thirsting to offer us good terms of peace, and that we have been too stubborn to accept them, [p. 318] voices have even been raised to tell us that our Government is fighting on for the only reason that they stand in fear of the peace. Do they then not know that after Russia's treachery, the Germans are constantly increasing their demands? These people of Greater Germany, who now dominate the whole Empire, demand annexations on all fronts! It is impossible for the Allies to discuss a peace which will leave the crimes of Germany unpunished and will consign the whole world morally and commercially to the enemy. If our detractors wish for peace at any price, then let them say so openly, so that they can be taught that the whole nation is of a quite different opinion.

We shall not lay down our arms before we know the sanctity of international agreements is protected and our civilisation secured against every unprovoked attack."

Yea, verily, amen. I received this '*ceterum censeo*'[xliii] from the *Times* sent to me, apparently written by hand, from a man I know in London. How moderate is this appeal in comparison with the vulgarity of the English gutter press, who take responsibility for this War as far back as the detested "King-Sergeant" [xliv]and his son Frederick the Great. According the gutter press, Prussianism is the real evil spirit of Europe, which first of all trod the rest of Germany under its *Jackboot*, so that it can gladden its foreign neighbouring nations with the all the blessings of a '*culture*', for which only slave-mentalities could summon up sympathy. They continue that three times in the previous century Prussia had set Europe ablaze, and had not shrunk back before two bloody fratricidal wars. The Allies were really only fighting against the oppressor of Hannover, Bavaria and Austria, all of whom would utter a sigh of relief if the corporal's baton wielded by Prussia were smashed to pieces for ever. And so on, and so forth in all [p. 319] varied tones of hate. The English press has an easy time of it in using historical arguments to win over the masses, who have great admiration for an education which they do not possess. Austria alone is the only country that seems recently to have received a friendly wink. A fearful anxiety of the great German Offensive sets the forest of press pages roaring forth. The Chief of the General Staff, Robertson,[xlv] has fallen victim to the intrigues of Lloyd George. Today Dover has been shelled, the English in return have conquered Jericho.[xlvi] Reval[xlvii] is in German hands.

For its hundredth production the laudable German Theatre in Douglas put on *Die beiden Seehunde*.[xlviii]

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February is drawing to a close, and the whole Camp is dominated by a fretful and at the same time uneasy atmosphere, as on the eve of great events. In the previous year, the great Offensive began at the start of April. Amongst the old ship's captains, who spend the whole day sitting over their grog, the mood is 'north-easter a-blowing, and sea running high.' Men dive onto the newspapers, and attempt to decode the real sense of the news, as if it were written in accordance with a secret code. It cannot be denied that all the diplomats have fled St. Petersburg, after the mob stormed the English Embassy. In Bucharest, Kühlmann has announced the peace terms, and in Kiel S.M.S. *Wolf* has arrived unscathed, after a year's cruising round the Indian Ocean sent three-hundred and fifty-thousand tons of shipping to the bottom of the sea.

*

After some occasional flashes of sheet-lightning had shot up into the jet-black sky, only to disappear once more powerless into the sultry air, a blinding bolt of lightning shot directly down. Immediately after that came a crashing clap of thunder, like a short ripping blow, [p. 320] and at the same time the clouds opened and plunged in a giddy fall to earth. In a bright, howling, whistling salvo, the shower swept across the soaking soil: the Great German Offensive has been unleashed, with thunder and lightning, on a front a hundred and twenty miles wide; shocked, everyone held his breath.

"Now it is time! Now the judgement of Days approaches,
The flames lick around the lies!

We, however, stay put and do not flock together
In fear and doubt:

Only strength and trust will end the War
And lead the good fight to lasting victory!"

*

"*Douglas, Isle of Man, March 1918*"

I have just come from the roll call, which the Commandant had ordered. With a great cohort, Madoc appeared in the Hall. I had not taken a seat, so that when he did appear, I should not need to stand up. The Colonel began to read out a long list of numbers. As if at a lottery, everyone waited fully tensed up, to see whether his number had been drawn. Von Beyerheim, von Br., fat Pemmler, who had been rounded up three-and-a-half years earlier while on his honeymoon, and many others had their names called out, but just not mine. The Commandant cleared his throat perceptibly, stroked his moustache, and issued the command: "All those whose names I have mentioned, have your kit ready for next week: Holland." There was a sudden great burst of activity. These lucky ones, they were destined for Holland, closer to home, off and away from this damned island! The chosen ones embraced each other, but the rest of us were bitterly disappointed and slunk away.

*

[p. 321]

"March 1918"

Now the hundred-and-twenty lucky ones — what's 'lucky' in these days and times (?) — have left. Large numbers of tents and huts are standing empty, in the Hall the tables are being pushed up closer together. You feel like one of the marooned on the island of oblivion. I'm living on my own. Books take me to foreign lands, amongst different people, into times past. Smoking and lying on your bunk help against hunger. I hear just now that the transport ferry had a twenty-four hours' delay in landing at Liverpool.

*

Long queues at the canteen, where you get twenty cigarettes for the week, or a couple of ounces of pipe tobacco: no boxes of matches for anyone to buy. I've just been reading Mommsen's the wonderful description of the Second Macedonian War.[xlix] Suddenly all the newspapers have gone quiet about today's theatre of war; only the *Isle of Man Times* tells us that Japan intends in thirty days (!) to move on the overland route into St. Petersburg. The theatre has been playing *So'n Windhund*.[l] — I also spoke with a representative of Maass & Schramm, the Hamburg Forwarding Company, asking whether he could look after my things, if I had to leave suddenly. The storage, insurance and dispatch will cost a fortune, and von Beyerheim has still not written back to me, nor has he sent me the sixteen English pounds he promised me. Concerning the exchange to Holland, I have appealed to Lord Haldane, the former Minister of War; very carefully, it's true, but if he has ears to hear…

*

"*Douglas, March 1918*"

Latest ruse: England, France, America and Italy will not recognise the German-Russian peace, and reject Germany's last offer of [p. 322] "*status quo* on the Western Front, so long as the Allies recognise the Peace of Brest-Litovsk".[li] The heading in the *Times* read: "We shall fight to the last man — for Russia." There is now nothing left, except to begin the most terrible mass slaughter in the history of the world, it is terrifying and appalling. Besides that, Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, declared: "For military reasons I cannot accede to the question of a general exchange of Civilian Prisoners." Probably quite simply because about forty-five thousand Germans are in English imprisonment, and only one twentieth of that number are English prisoners in German hands. This unequal numerical ratio is authoritative, no one wants to bring out so important a bargaining chip before its time. There you can see the noblesse of English humanity and legal interpretation. The English have always done it thus. What's more, the English writers of academic papers, Oxford professors and pseudo-scholars, deny their Germanic descent with renegade zeal and stress their Celtic blood, which they say links them as kinsfolk eminently to France, just as did the Romanic culture which Julius Caesar, and later the Roman-Catholic Church, had brought to them. Thus accordingly Britannia is a true sister of the Latin peoples and is defending alongside these Latin peoples their shared civilisation against Teutonic barbarism.

*

"*Beginning of spring 1918*"

The atmosphere in the Camp is muted and full of secretiveness. The unending grey rain of spring beats on my window, and its droplets run like big tears along the steamed-up panes of glass. Before going to bed, I went for a stroll through the Camp with Herr Apert; the sky was like an impatient, precipitous [p. 323] cloudscape, like a river at freezing point, my companion in his black, fluttering mantle, was like a discoursing spectre. He spoke very gloomily of the future, the reason being, he said, that England had also stiff-neckedly rejected the latest German peace proposal. But the English were now admitting that in 1917 they had lost almost four thousand ships to the U-boats, although the weekly Admiralty reports put it down as only ten ships on average, which at the most would make five hundred and fifty ships. Did not the lackadaisical nation notice how it was being duped? England and America are now about to use an unparalleled show of force in order to take possession of the Dutch tonnage, which amounts to eight hundred thousand GRT. How can anyone see that other than as an act of desperation? The argument runs that if England is also fighting for Holland's

liberty, then Holland must also be prepared to do favours in return. Apert thought Germany now probably had far more than one hundred U-boats — but by the time the world tonnage has been sunk…? "It will have to be earlier than *it Angliae valde podex cum glacie fundamentale*",[lii] and with that I closed the debate.

*

"*Douglas, Isle of Man, March 1918*"

The rumour of the breakthrough of the German Offensive between Péronne and Bapaume was spreading like wildfire. A feverish atmosphere is taking hold everywhere. In the evening we read it black on white: sixteen thousand English troops captured and two hundred field-guns seized. Now the sword of Damocles is finally falling on the neck of the British bull , and the throes of death begin to descend on France. Victorious Germany becomes *arbiter gentium*;[liii] the future belongs to the Fatherland.

At the parade, the Commandant looked very old and grumpy. The events on the Western Front and the English defeats [p. 324] enrage him bitterly, he held his stick clamped under his upper arm and looked neither to the right nor to the left; his escort did likewise.

*

A massive German field-gun, which has a range of seventy-five kilometres and a trajectory of thirty-five kilometres,[liv] is shelling Paris, one shot every ten minutes. Just to show now French heroism, the *Bystander* carried a picture of a Paris hat-shop by way of illustration, which showed an Englishwoman trying on luxury hats. All at once she gives a jerk and drops the hat aghast. "What was that?" "Oh, nothing much", says the shop girl, "'*Big Bertha*' dropping something on us; a minor matter, *on est accoutumée*.[lv] — This hat, Madame, would suit you really charmingly."

I collected a parcel from the censor, it had arrived for von Beyerheim. It is always repugnant for us to see how the censor rips apart every parcel himself, rummages in the loving gifts, chops up sausages and cheese, breaks cigarettes in the middle. He could not, however, ruin the Ludwig Richter[lvi] Album. When I was looking at it in my room, the love and warmth of the pictures lay as balsam on my shattered imagination. From them comes a buzzing as if children's shouts of joy and the twittering of birds, the landscapes are full of that delightfully festive atmosphere which spring and Sunday generate together on a lonely walk across field and meadow. These illustrations portray an almost exhaustive image of German peasant life in the home, the world, work and pleasure, joy and pain. — Today, straight after the whistle for lights-out, the sergeant walked around and banged with his baton on all the doors that still had lights burning behind them; and that being so I must close my diary.

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[p. 325]

Yes, today we've got stormy seas. The Commandant, furious because of the successful Offensive, is now attacking us on his own part. He's had the recreation field sealed off, the canteen as well. The German

workers in the English brushes factory have gone on strike because they are no longer allowed their three extra biscuits. Because of this, the sports ground has also been closed. "No work, no pleasure", the 'Old Man' decided. There was a fearful storm in the night, which turned over many tents and buried me as I slept; it rattled at the windows, and cold currents of air got in through the gaps, sharp as a needles, right down into my compound.

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"*Douglas, Isle of Man, March 1918*"

Bapaume has been recaptured. In Parliament the French MPs rant full of holy anger and Gallic rhetoric about our giant field-gun, which hit a church on Palm Sunday, and is reported as having killed seventy-five persons. They ought to know really that no one can make an omelette without breaking the eggs. And what about Karlsruhe? How were things there?[lvii] In the meantime the rumours of a victory near Soissons, with the capture of one hundred thousand English troops and a second Offensive in Alsace have unfortunately not been corroborated. But sixteen big and twelve small ships have been sunk, and an advance made on Amiens.

*

Today, Good Friday,[lviii] a charity collection list went around for the crew of the German steamer *Valeria*,[lix] who came in here yesterday. It had been sunk by one of the few English submarines, in neutral Norwegian sovereign waters [p. 326]; a fifteen-year-old cabin boy was amongst those rescued. They escaped with their bare lives, and hope that they can get more to eat here than back at home.

Neither Herr von Beyerheim nor the others have so far been heard from. — The fourth Easter Sunday behind barbed wire, and on top of that it's raining 'cats and dogs'. A year ago, the English were shooting up Dublin; we could hear the thunder of the guns, now they want to string up Sir Robert Casement,[lx] the Irish Freedom hero. — During roll call in the Hall the men were very excited, the names were called out of those who had recently been checked up on by the Home Office doctor. They had to go to the Guard Room, where the 'Old Man' told them that on Wednesday they were going Holland and should pack up their things. Once again I was not one of them. I felt empty and exhausted. I sat there quite still, for a while there was nothing but broad grey dreariness in me. I didn't even have the strength left to light myself a cigarette. I had to report to Sergeant Fail, who was holding letters which the censor had not passed because they contained requests for food, and was now returning them to countless men. I myself had written to Germany, for the first time asking for food. — Druschki, the tall ship's officer, invited me round to his place, he was one of those leaving. He dipped a ship's biscuit in water, then gave it a smear of margarine, shook some salt on it, and placed it on a stone plate on a double burner; it turned soft and warm, and tasted like a salted bretzel; I even got a drop of milk and a lump of sugar in my coffee, all of these things being rarities long-since stored away.

*

"*Douglas, Isle of Man, April 1918*"

Three cheers and three leaps into the air as well! Happiness swells up within me, a thing that widens my chest and bursts my heart. All resentment is as if blown away, something [p. 327] youthful, impetuous drives me onwards, intoxicating smoke bewitches me! In plain German: I'm on the list! Top-Capt'n Henk showed

me the list of those who tomorrow will be called for examination by the Home Office doctor! I'm in the hundred and eleventh place; three numbers one![lxi] — I can't sleep and try with my diary to get myself sorted out. Half-ripe thoughts of fear, forebodings pressed together in agonising images, pursue me in dream. It is the reaction to joy which had been huge, is now painfully reduced in radius and been returned to reality-size. What is all this with the list? It is not the list of exchanges, but only a list of examinations! Unfortunately there are reasons that might rule me out. Oh my lord, these monotonous gloomy, hot bubbling thoughts, which time and time again well up in one's brain…

*

"*Douglas, Isle of Man, April 1918*"

I put on my best suit, then watched the sun rising up from the sea, the gleaming ball, which glides mechanically over desperation and hope, clear and soulless. The camp was full of a buzzing such as arises in a bee-hive just before the queen-bee flies out. The Commandant is supposed to have said that this would without denial be the last transport out. I had such a bad headache that I had to lie down. Privy Councillor Koe…. brought me a powder. — The tension in my nerves showed no sign of abating, and its iron grip passed away only slowly from the top of my head and allowed the agonising singing in my ears to subside. I got up at half-past three, and was accompanied by Gaukel to the hospital. At first we had to wait in a cold anteroom, then on the staircase, and proceed every quarter of an hour one step higher, every man who came out was eagerly questioned. We heard that the Home Office doctor [p. 328] had said to Katz, the Jew: "A strong fellow like you ought to go on a farm and eat cabbages and potatoes." That wasn't very encouraging! Finally the decisive bell rang out for me. Although my heart was beating furiously and unbearably, I took all my courage in both hands. Three men were sitting behind a table with a green cloth on it, who put me in mind of the Court of the Dead in Hades. The middle one was a broad-shouldered man with a grey moustache, dark bushy eye brows over two cool and impenetrable eyes, which looked at me distrustfully from below, as if I were a transgressor. Dr. Marshall, our camp doctor, was fiddling casually with a pencil. But he rose to speak and said: "That's young Dunbar, who was interned when he was only just seventeen years old. He writes away the whole day long, but with such small letters that it damages his eyes. He ought to be on eggs and milk, but…" and here he grinned: "Where do you get them from nowadays?" During all this, the big medical man, who was able to decide between good fortune and bad, had been staring at me unremittingly with his eyes composed as it seemed from crystals of ice. Finally he gave the command: "Put your tongue out"; which I did with great gusto. "That's allright", he then concluded, and added words which froze me stiff: "How is your father?" But Dr. Marshall with a smile pressed on the bell and motioned me gently away. — What had that been supposed to mean? I spoke with everyone I met. Would I be going to a farm or something even worse? No one knew exactly what was going to follow from the examination; a typical English torture.

The Germans are approaching Calais.

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[p. 329]

"*Douglas, 15th April 1918*"

The days of uncertainty passed like a laborious march on a country road, it adhered to your body like coal-tar. Until Klemm snaps me out of my sleep and roars out: "Your name is on the list, get to the Commandant at ten o'clock." "Are you coming as well?" "No, just twelve men." While I was dressing I felt almost numb; that couldn't be, could it, out of two hundred men examined, only twelve, and could you believe it, I was one of them? It was a bad joke. In the end I shook all thoughts off, just as a dog dries its coat, and rushed off to the

Parcel Office. True, standing radiant in chalk on the message board was the number 4088! I was still not yet convinced, perhaps it was someone 'shitting me', which is what the Old Man used to do a lot of to people at the end of the parade. So the twelve of us went inside into the good room. On this occasion, the Commandant sat between Dr. Marshall and Major Bland. He looked us in the face, fiercely, one after the other. Dr. Marshall's face remained expressionless. The Sergeant separated us into two groups. "You four are going to Germany", Madoc rapped out angrily. "You eight to Holland. At five o'clock, large luggage will be inspected, tomorrow it'll be the turn of your hand luggage; get out." Completely speechless at the splendid certainty, I staggered out with the others. I felt as though I was drunk, my teeth chattered. Now we had to get packed together. My friends and Edmund, the steward, tumbled over each other to help me wind up my long years of domestic 'house-keeping'. I sold a few bits, but not a lot, because I was allowed only four pounds in travelling money. The rest of the items I gave away. Lieutenant Suck searched through the suitcases. We were permitted to take only two suits, three shirts, two pairs of socks, two pairs of shoes. Most of the things that had been wrapped up were ripped open again. This is the last entry on the 'Island of Men'. Meissner will take charge of the diaries, and pass them on later to Mr. Cunningham for safekeeping. I wonder whether I'll ever [p. 330] see them again? If not, then the Englishmen will have something that they can read, and that way I shan't forget anything.

*

Endnotes

i 6 December 1917; ca. 2000 deaths, non-fatal injuries ca. 9000.

ii Possibly Josef Hinterseher (1878-1955); born in Munich, studied at the School of Arts and Crafts, Paris, 1900-1910.

iii Auguste Rodin, (born 1840), died November 17th, 1917.

iv *Anders liest der Knabe den Terenz (anders der Greis)* 'the young lad reads his Terence differently (from the old man)': a quotation from Hugo Grotius, Dutch jurist, 1583-1645.

v Dunbar-Kalckreuth adds the following footnote in German (p. 296, fn.1): "For around 80,000 Reichsmarks, the value of shares in his rubber plantation in Sumatra, which lay in an English bank, the German government offered the author's father [Frederick Parker Dunbar] compensation of $^{1}/_{133}$% (1926!) Even the Labour Government under MacDonald in 1930 kept its hands on all German private property, in contrast to Italy and the United States." [80,000 RM in 1926 would rate 28692.53 grams of gold; cf. *www.Historicalstatistics.org/currencyconvertor*.]

vi Theognis of Megara, Greek lyric poet, ca. 6th Century BC: 'Best of all for mortal beings is never to have been born at all/ Nor ever to have set eyes on the bright light of the sun/ But, since he is born, a man should make utmost haste through the gates of Death/ And then repose, the earth piled into a mound round himself.' [*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theognis_of_Megara*]

vii By means of the British naval blockade of Germany, 1914-18, which was intensified in 1917.

viii Ottokar Czernin (1872-1932), Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, 1916-18.

ix General Edmund Allenby (1861-1936), 1st Viscount Allenby; victories in Palestine 1917-18.

x Grey had two nephews, Cecil and Adrian Graves. Cecil was taken prisoner in August 1914; Adrian was killed at the Front in April 1918 (*www. gov.uk blog*). Dunbar-Kalckreuth errs.

xi *entelechy*: "that which gives perfection to anything" (OED online).

xii The reference is to prisoners held by British forces during the American War of Independence (1775-83), specifically on HMS *Jersey* in New York Harbour. Around 8000 of the prisoners (men and boys) died of disease, starvation and maltreatment (*www/The Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument*).

xiii *Concentration camp* (OED): "The term was first used during the Cuban war of independence (1895-98) to denote camps in which rural Cubans (and others) were interned by the Spanish military authorities, and was subsequently used of the camps instituted by Lord

Kitchener during the Boer War (1899-1902). *Concentration camp* is now most strongly associated with the several hundred camps established by the Nazis in Germany and occupied Europe from 1933 to 1945, among the most infamous being Dachau, Belsen, and Auschwitz."

xiv Dunbar-Kalckreuth makes a veiled reference to his own case, though sixteen years old he was not.

xv The 'Isle of Men' is a literal translation of the German *Die Männerinsel*.

xvi *Certosa di Pavia*: a monastery and complex in Lombardy, northern Italy (*wikipedia.org*).

xvii A letter and envelope exist on the subject 'Die Weltwelle in der Zeitraumkugel'. It appeared as number 269 in the on-line catalogue of Autograph Auctioneer Axel Schmolt, Steinrath 10, 47867 Krefeld (*http://www.schmolt.de*), on 10 December 2010.

xviii Actually Rufus Isaacs (1860-1935), 1st Marquess of Reading, Liberal politician and judge.

xix Insider Trading Scandal, involving highly placed Liberals, including Lloyd George, summer of 1912.

xx Actually Joseph Caillaux (1863-1944). Imprisoned by Clemenceau in January 1918 as a traitor for seeking a rapprochement with Germany.

xxi 'Homeland'.

xxii The reference is to *J'accuse par un Allemand* (Lausanne, 1915), translated into English as '*J'accuse! By A German'*, and published by Hodder and Stoughton (London, New York, Toronto), 1915, in English translation by Alexander Gray. The book attempts to discover who started the Great War, but based only on publicly-available reports of policy, mainly from 1909-13, the book had little chance of reaching the truth, and satisfied itself by pointing the finger at Austria and Germany. It has no connection to the French Dreyfus Affair.

xxiii *New Testament*, Matthew 5,3, King James Version: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven', i.e. those led by belief, and not by intellect.

xxiv Jacques Bainville (1879-1936), French historian and journalist.

xxv Peace concluding the Thirty Years' War (1618-48), the principle being one of non-interference in other countries' affairs.

xxvi USCGC *Tampa* (Coast Guard vessel) sunk by UB-91 on afternoon of 26 September 1918. 147 dead. Dunbar-Kalckreuth places the incident in January 1918.

xxvii Edward Henry Carson, Baron, (1854-1935).

xxviii Baron von Hertling (1843-1919), Chancellor of the German Empire, 1917-18.

xxix The Socialist Anthem, indicating the solidarity of the labour movement. The words date from 1889, and were set to the tune of the German Christmas carol, 'O Tannenbaum' (The Christmas Tree).

xxx Bessarabia: west of River Dnieper, home of Bessarabian Germans, 1814-1940. Now (2019) divided between Moldavia and Ukraine.

xxxi Vittorio Emanuele Orlando (1860-1952), Italian statesman, 1918.

xxxii 'Swallow' (German *Schwalbe*), nickname for German bomber aircraft of World War I.

xxxiii *Was werden die Leute sagen?*

xxxiv *Habeat sibi* (Latin) 'each one to his own taste'.

xxxv Full German title: *Velhagen und Klasings Almanach*, Berlin, Bielefeld, Leipzig, Wien.

xxxvi He lived 1773-1850.

xxxvii *Das schöne Mädchen von Pao*, by Otto Julius Bierbaum (1865-1910), published by Schuster & Loeffler Verlag, Berlin, 1899.

xxxviii The Great Elector: Frederick William, Elector of Brandenburg (1620-88).

xxxix Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1679): Brandenburg-Prussia was forced by French military pressure into signing this [*wiki*].

xl Probably garbled English for "send Beyerheim back here".

xli The bracketed question mark is Dunbar-Kalckreuth's, and may indicate that the reference is unclear to him.

xlii Sir William Ramsay (1852-1916), Scottish chemist; stressed the importance of scientific education to government.

xliii *Ceterum censeo* […*Carthaginem esse delendam*]: the phrase was repeated at the conclusion of all his speeches by Cato the Elder (234-149 BC), prior to the 3rd Punic War against Carthage: 'And for the rest, I think Carthage must be destroyed'; for 'Carthage', read 'Germany'.

xliv Frederik William I of Prussia (1688-1740), known as the 'Soldier King' (not the 'Sergeant-King').

xlv Sir William Robert Robertson (1860-1933).

xlvi 19-21 February 1918.

xlvii *Reval*: now known as Tallinn (Estonia).

xlviii *The Two Seals*, a comedy in three acts by Austrian Carl Roessler (1864-1948).

xlix Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903), German classicist and historian; awarded 1902 Nobel Prize for Literature for his *History of Rome*.

l *So'n Windhund: 'What a greyhound', farce in three acts by Curt Kraatz and Arthur Hoffmann* (1912).

li Signed on 3 March 1918, between the new Bolshevik government of Russia and the Central Powers, which ended the World War for Russia.

lii Latin version of German *England geht der Arsch mit Grundeis*: 'England's got the wind up [its arse is icing up].'

liii Latin: 'the judge of nations'.

liv 75 kilometres ~ 47 miles; 35 kilometres ~ 22 miles.

lv French: 'people get used to it'.

lvi Ludwig Richter (1803-84), German Romantic painter.

lvii Dunbar-Kalckreuth (p. 325, fn 2) glosses this as 'an attack by French aircraft on a procession'.

lviii Good Friday: 29 March 1918.

lix The *Valeria* was built by Henry Koch (Lübeck) in 1913. She was sunk by a British auxiliary cruiser (not a British submarine) near Nordfjord, 21 March 1918. [*www.the shipslist.com*].

lx Casement's name was *Roger Casement*, not Robert Casement. He had already been hanged in London, on 3 August 1916, for high treason.

lxi 'Three ones': the reference is to the 'one' which in Germany indicates a top-class mark in anything. He regards three of them (111) as an extremely lucky omen.

Background

The discussion re "old Herr Evers" seems somewhat embroidered or the names have been confused - a John Evers aged 56 born in Lubeck but had been living in England for over 30 years and was noted as a labourer, died of a heart attack on the 21st November 1916. He was detained in in Camp III compound 2 with Knockaloe camp number 24904 having been transferred from Stobs on the 6th July 1916, his home address was Bootle where his wife was noted as living with her daugher and son-in-law. The visiting medical officer had seen him the previous day as Evers had complained of gastric catarrh and had noticed a mitral disease of the heart but which he considered slight. The inquest [1916/75] makes no mention of any sons. There were some 7 suicides of internees at Knockaloe but no inquest report matches any part of the story.

The final section dealing with his medical examination and selection for internment in Holland raises several questions - Captain Schmidt comments that those chosen for Holland were selected on basis of good health and money. The eight selected for Holland were:
Albert Plosch
Wilhelm Wohlfahrt
Ewald Alfonso Keilig
Paul Amandus Wieck
Frederick Dunbar - real age 30 though feigned age 22
Richard Charles Ade - age 36 - English address
Alfred Rueff - age 24
Franz Ragalle - no age given - English address

none of these appear to have spent any time in camp hospitals. Details of most Germans interned at the start of the war are not available as the lists of such issued by the PoWIB are missing from various records

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Any comments, errors or omissions gratefully received The Editor
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